1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

163 should be less marked in the town, where rich food is the rule. Physiological factors are thus not sufficient to explain the low fertility-rate in
842 Nupe. This is confirmed by the data of Table IV. For in the context of this table, which refers only to women who have had children and excludes sterile women, the difference in birth-rate precludes to some extent the explanation on the ground of constitutional sterility and suggests instead the influence of another factor: the existence of birth restriction in the town, in other words, the effects of *social* motives.

842 Nupe religion and morality, as we shall see later, emphasize very strongly the idea of progeny. Nevertheless, in the higher social strata, especially in Bida town, the women often prefer childlessness, or at least do not want more than one child. Childlessness opens to them certain economic opportunities of which women with children, or many children, cannot avail themselves as easily. The Bida women know how to bring about abortion, and even know the use of contraceptives—or rather of certain practices and drugs which are believed to work as contraceptives. Many of them are clearly mere superstitions and the expression of magical beliefs; whether certain drugs which one can buy (in the greatest secrecy) from medicine-men and barber-doctors are more effective, I am unable to say.[1] However this may be, sterility of the Bida women is, to speak with Durkheim, a typical 'social fact'. In our own terminology, it represents a typical case of that 'indirect' influence of environment which determines population movement, working through considerations of economic benefit and standard of living. And this influence becomes evident in our case not only as an abstract social trend, derived from statistical correlations, but still more in the form of conscious and tangible behaviour.

Sex Ratio

162 Statistical figures show a surprising fact: a marked preponderance of females among the adult population, but hardly any preponderance of females—indeed, in Bida town, the reverse relation—in the sex ratio of non-adults.

TABLE VI[2]

	Adults		*Non-adults*		*Females per head of male population*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Adult*	*Non-adult*
Bida Emirate .	57,759	66,546	22,949	24,204	1·15	1·1
Agaie-Lapai Emirate . .	20,148	23,915	6,139	5,938	1·1	0·9
Bida town . .	7,714	11,602	3,240	2,675	1·5	0·8
Bida Emirate excl. of Bida town .	50,045	54,944	19,709	21,529	1·1	1·1

[1] The Nupe 'doctors' know two kinds of contraceptives: temporary contraceptives of a magical nature (e.g. a magical belt), and permanent contraceptives—powders which are taken internally. These drugs are considered 'evil', immoral medicines, but are made and sold all the same.

[2] *Census of Nigeria*, ii, pp. 176 et seq.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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This discrepancy is partly explained by the fact that girls marry at an earlier age than boys, and also by the fact that polygamy, especially the large-scale polygamy in Bida town, implies marriage of young girls to much older men. Married girls being counted in this table as 'adults', these factors must upset the 'normal' sex ratio in the higher age groups of non-adults. But this explanation only underlines the general social problem emerging from these figures: how are we to interpret the divergence between the sex ratio among adults (implied in polygamous marriage), and the sex ratio among non-adults? In other words, how can the sex ratio in actual polygamous marriage be harmonized with the sex ratio on which such marriage potentially depends? There is, first, the heavier mortality among men, whose numbers, only a generation ago, were constantly reduced in the almost permanent wars in Nupe. But the comparison between the figures referring to Bida town and to the rural districts in the Emirate respectively reveals that there is also another influence at work. In Bida town the difference between the two sex ratios is 0·7, in the rural districts the figures are identical. That means that marriage in the villages—monogamous marriage, or polygamous marriage on a small scale—can rely on local women, whereas Bida must import its wives from outside. Formerly slave girls constituted a large contingent of this urban importation of wives-to-be; today, in smaller proportion, girls from the country drift into Bida. We shall see later that genealogies and marriage statistics fully endorse this explanation.

Population and Emigration

Translated into terms of general population movement, the strikingly low birth- and fertility-rate among the Nupe can mean only one thing: a decreasing, or at least a stationary, population. The general population statistics in the Census can, on the whole, be taken to confirm this conclusion. But the nature of the available statistics does not allow more than this indication of a general trend. The total population of the Nupe tribe was given as 349,008 in the Census of 1921;[1] ten years later the figure is 326,017. These figures, implying a fall of over 20,000 in ten years, cannot be accepted as anything but a very crude approach to the true situation.

The difficulties which stand in the way of exact population statistics in a West African territory need not be stressed specially. Yet the earlier Census figures were likely to have underrated rather than overrated the population; with the improved technique of registration (e.g. for taxation) in the last ten to fifteen years one would have expected an increase rather than a decrease in the numbers that appear in the Census, even if the population had remained stationary or had decreased slightly. Certain other sources of error, however, seem not to have been eliminated, above all, inconsistencies in tribal classification. The native and British officials who compile the Census lists are frequently insufficiently acquainted with tribal and sub-tribal names and distinctions.[2] Thus,

[1] See C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, Oxford, 1925, vol. ii.
[2] It may therefore well be that the 1921 Census which was compiled under the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

and peoples, its organization and its personalities, and above all its centre, the town of Bida. It seems characteristic that of the people of Sakpe, a backwood village in the centre of Bida Emirate, a large number have been to Bida, thirty miles away, but no one to Labozi, which is only ten miles away but lies in the opposite direction to Bida. There is only an apparent contradiction between this parochial outlook with respect to the community next door and this interest for the kingdom and its capital. It reflects the centripetal structure of the system of cultural 'co-ordination' which we identified with the Nupe state. But let us examine first, under the aspect of community and common life, its capital, Bida.

Bida as it exists to-day is a comparatively young town. It was founded by the first Fulani Emir of Nupe about 1860. The old Beni village of Bida which stood on its site, a small village of four *efu*, forms to-day the 'old city' of Bida, its innermost part, known as *ba nin*, the Inside. At the time of the British occupation Bida is reported to have had a population of 60,000. Later it dropped rapidly: the enormous households of the feudal lords dissolved, slaves and private armies disappeared, and absentee landlords moved out into the country to live on their land. The old trade-route to the south which ran through Bida was diverted by the British, who suggested the shorter route from Zaria to Lokoja.[1] Trade began to avoid the defeated, impoverished capital. Some ten years ago Bida counted over 30,000 inhabitants; the last figure, for 1934, is 23,286. But the cosmopolitan character of the population still betrays its character of a metropolis: all tribal sections of Nupe are represented, and besides almost every tribe of Nigeria: Hausa, Yoruba, Yagba, Bunu, Kukuruku, Dakakari, Kamberi, Koro, Asaba, Gara, Tiv, and many more. The Nupe of Bida total over 20,000; of the strangers, Yoruba with nearly 600 and Hausa with 400–500 constitute the largest contingent in this medley of tribes and races.

And now the town itself. From a broken-off plateau that forms its northern edge, from the foot of two flat-topped hills, the town sweeps down into the plain. The town wall embracing the wide expanse of Bida runs over the edge of the plateau, climbs down into the plain, crosses two rivers and opens its gates upon four roads. This wall was estimated to measure twelve miles in circumference. To-day it has lost its former importance. It has broken down in many places and has been left unrepaired. A go-ahead Administrative Officer some two years ago had ordered all town gates to be pulled down—to make room for the increased motor traffic (which never came). Also, the town no longer fills the space within the wall, and many ruins and deserted places inside the wall betray the changes that have overtaken Bida and its people.

Four big roads lead through Bida, roughly in the shape of a cross, from east to west and north to south. The road from the Kaduna river enters Bida in the west, by the 'Wuya gate', so named after the village on the banks of the Kaduna. Just outside the west gate is 'New Bida'—a nucleus of New Bida—consisting to-day only of a few official buildings, among them the Emir of Bida's newly built residence. We leave New Bida behind, with its brick buildings, its tin roofs, and glass windows, and

[1] Dr. W. B. Baikie, R.N., *J. R. Geogr. Soc.*, 1867, p. 362.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

on the right bank of the Niger, where Lokoja now stands, but at its founding moved over to the left bank where they are to-day, in the Basa-Nge District of Igala Division, Kabba Province. The District contains 12 riverain and nine inland units, which are mostly Basa-Nge, except for five Igala and two Igbira-Panda-Kakanda. The largest is Gbonoko, the District headquarters. The Basa-Nge are subject to the *Ata* Gala.[16]

Other groups, originally alien, but now Nupeized

Konú (Eyagi-Nupe): of Yoruba (Yagba) origin, brought to Nupe country as slaves to introduce the Yoruba arts of weaving and indigo-dyeing. They are to be found in Kutigi and the neighbouring villages.[17]

Gbari Bautá ("Gbari slaves"): in the north of Nupe territory near the Gbari border.[18]

Kakanda (Hyaba, Akanda):[19] on both banks of the Niger, north of its confluence with the Gurara River. They are of non-Nupe stock, though, according to Temple,[20] they have always lived among the Nupe. Clifford, however, says that they were formerly (? *c.* 1750) subject to Igala.[21] They have certainly undergone cultural assimilation to the Nupe and have adopted the language of the Nupe "proper." According to Westermann and Bryan, they speak either a dialect of Nupe or a closely related language.[22]

Ibanji: a sub-tribe mentioned in the 1931 Census, which has not been identified.

In addition to the groups mentioned above, Temple gives several names which are villages or settlements and not sub-tribes.[23] Her *Bata* (misprinted *Baja* in the 1931 Census) and described as an agricultural people living in Lapai Emirate are not Nupe but probably Gbari. Her *Bororózhi* (nomadic cattle Fulani) only come to Nupe on seasonal migration and are not Nupeized; her *Góizhi* (settled Fulani) are the Fulani ruling class of Nupe Emirate and not a group in a tribal sense.[24]

Demographic Data

Population Estimates

1952 Census: 348,979 (Northern Region)
10,198 (Eastern and Western Regions)
1931 Census: 326,017 (Northern Provinces)
1921 Census: 349,008 (Northern Provinces)

Sub-tribes[25]

1931 Census:[26]

Beni	48,595	Ebe	9,100	Dibo	18,220
Bataci	4,627	Kupa	15,470	Kakanda	4,518
Kyedye	2,493	Benu	7,457	Basa-Nge	19,163

The figures of the 1931 Census show a decrease of 23,000 or 7% on the figures for 1921. Fluctuations in the earlier numbers given for the populations have resulted

[16] Nadel, 1942, p. 12; Hopkins, 1934; Westermann and Bryan, 1952, p. 86.
[17] Nadel, op. cit., p. 20.
[18] Ibid., p. 21.
[19] They should not be confused with the Akanda of Kabba and Koton Karifi Divisions of Kabba Province, who are Yoruba. The Kakanda are said by Meek (1917) to call themselves Ashe. They are known to the Hausa as Bunu (the name of a Yoruba section) and to the Igbira as Ehabe (MacBride, 1935).
[20] Temple, 1919, p. 167.
[21] Miles Clifford, "A Nigerian chiefdom," *J. roy. anthrop. inst.*, LXVI, 1936, pp. 392–436.
[22] Westermann and Bryan, loc. cit.; Nadel, op. cit., p. 13.
[23] e.g. Baedegi, Sakpe, Etsu, Pateji, Kutegi, Enagi, Gbachi, Duchu, Zumbufu.
[24] See Nadel, 1942, p. 71.
[25] Figures for all the sub-tribes listed above are not available, but the Census gives 11,944 for "Ibanji," which has not been identified.
[26] Later figures are not available.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

in part from erroneous naming of some tribes and sub-tribes as Nupe and the omission of others.[27] Marked decreases in the population are probably due to continuous small scale emigration, especially since 1930. This has been mostly in a southerly direction, to Ilorin, Lokoja, Ibadan, Oshogbo, and Lagos, i.e., to the wealthy and less heavily taxed districts of the south. In one or two cases, people of one sub-tribe have migrated into the district of another. Other significant reasons for the decrease in population may be venereal disease, abortion, and contraception, and the high infant mortality rate, though abortion is said to be practised only in the larger towns and before marriage. Infant mortality is probably the greatest single cause of the decline; many infants die of malaria.[28]

No detailed analysis has yet been made of the 1952 Census figures which, for the Northern Provinces, show an increase of about 23,000 on those of 1931.

Density of Population

The following estimates are available:

Division or District	*Persons per square mile*	*Date*
Bida	35·22	1931 Census
Agaie-Lapai	21·7	,, ,,
Lafiagi-Pategi	30	,, ,,
Badeggi	22	1934 (local census)
Gbangba	50	,, ,, ,,
Jima-Doko	53	,, ,, ,,
Kacha	60	,, ,, ,,
Mokwa	12	,, ,, ,,
Kutigi	13	,, ,, ,,
"Trans-Kaduna" (districts west of Kaduna river)	17·6	,, ,, ,,
"Cis-Kaduna" (districts east of Kaduna river)	55	,, ,, ,,

The difference in density east and west of the Kaduna River may be explained by the Fulani conquest of the Nupe and the consequent emigration of the Fulani rulers and their dependents into the area east of the Kaduna.[29]

[27] Nadel (1942, pp. 9–10) gives as examples the Ganagana (Dibo) who were sometimes classed as a separate group, and the "Tapa" (Takpa) who were listed separately in the Southern Provinces until it was discovered in 1936 that Takpa was the Yoruba name for Nupe.

[28] See Brooks, *Census of Nigeria* (1931) Vol. II, p. 29; Nadel, 1942, pp. 6–8; Weatherhead, M.S.

[29] Nadel, op. cit., p. 11.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CULTS

General

771 The majority of the Nupe are now Moslems and there is at least one small
162 mosque in every village. The 1931 Census gave 235,990 Moslems out of a total of 324,375 for all religions.[1] But in many communities pagan ritual exists side by side with some Moslem observances, the latter being increasingly adopted for reasons of prestige.

Among the pagans there is common belief in a sky god *Soko*, who is believed to have created the world and then withdrawn himself from communion with man. The Nupe concept of the cosmos is, according to Nadel, fundamentally amoral. God, having created the world, gave men access to certain mystical forces, making them at the same time subject to these and leaving them to make such use of these "powers" and of the material world as they would and could. First among these mystical forces is *kuti*, the compelling power of ritual, believed to be harnessed in varying degrees in a multiplicity of rites belonging to persons, communities, and associations, and conferring both special benefits or protection and increasing general well-being. At the same time, invocation of the ancestors of kinsfolk, of the people at large, and of the ancient rulers, can afford some measure of benefit or protection. This can also be gained through a separate use of "medicines" which are believed variously to combine pseudo-therapeutic and magical properties. Finally, the evil power of witchcraft, which God also put into the world, has to be discovered, punished, and driven out by special rites. Since, moreover, there are these alternatives with reference to both good fortune and bad, divination has a great part to play in determining the rites to be performed in particular situations.

Spirits

776 The Nupe believe that immaterial beings, existing in their own right and with some human attributes, live in the bush or in hills, trees, watercourses, and other natural features. Their Hausa-Arabic name (*aljenúši*, sing. *aljénu*) suggests that some aspects of this belief may be borrowed from Islam. The spirits may be male or female, friendly or hostile, though only two—*Ndáduma* (Father Niger) and *Kətsá* (associated with a rock in midstream near Jebba Island)—are thought to possess any considerable powers.[3] Another group of spirits is vaguely associated with animals. The least clearly conceived are personal spirits or spirit doubles, which belong to every individual from birth to death and cannot be changed. These may be good or bad.[4]

769 Spirits of the dead (*kuci*) may be reincarnated in their own descendants.
776 Approach to the Supreme Being can be made through ancestral spirits. Special sacrifices are performed either in the house or on the grave of a particular ancestor and the *kuci* are invariably invoked in the ceremonials surrounding birth, marriage, and death. Otherwise it seems that ancestral sacrifices are performed only sporadically and for a specific reason, such as illness in the family.[5]

776 Tsoede, who is regarded by all Nupe as their common ancestor, is venerated in an elaborate cycle of myths and rituals surrounding sacred objects—chains and bronze figures—connected with him.[6] He is, however, outside the general framework of Nupe religious beliefs.

[1] Census of Nigeria, vol. II, p. 63. Unfortunately there are no later figures available for comparison.
[2] See below, pp. 47–8.
[3] See below.
[4] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 26–31.
[5] Ibid., pp. 29–5.
[6] Ibid., pp. 31–2.